

# The Winfield Daily Courier

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10/23/2006 1:19:00 PM

## USDA, others help worker relocate

By **ROY GRABER**  
Managing Editor

ARKANSAS CITY - When Rubbermaid officials announced earlier this year they would be closing the plant in Centerville, Iowa, Mark Martin was one of many workers there whose lives changed.

Martin, a longtime employee of Rubbermaid who is hearing-impaired, wanted to stay with the company. He decided to stay with Rubbermaid. But like many people looking for housing in Cowley County, he needed some help.

Martin had previously worked with the United States Department of Agriculture's Rural Development Agency for a home loan on his house in Iowa, and he was seeking this type of financing for a home in Cowley County.

Working with Rural Development, Citizens Bank of Kansas and Prudential Real Estate Realtor Joan Turner, Martin was able to find a nice, comfortable home on Eighth St. in Arkansas City.

Officials from all three entities, along with some of Martin's relatives, gathered at his new home Saturday for a special dedication. Chuck Banks, Rural Development's state director, was on hand to present Martin with an American flag for his home.

"Rural Development has been very aggressive in promoting affordable housing in rural areas across Kansas," Banks said. "Even though there are a lot of challenges in the rural areas, there are a lot of opportunities as well. It's a great story of Mark moving to Kansas."

Geoff Bissell, Martin's supervisor both in Centerville and now in Winfield, was also present for the dedication. He praised Martin for his good work and said he was glad to see Martin relocate to Winfield.

"He's an incredibly industrious worker," Bissell said. "He's a great asset to Rubbermaid."

Banks said it has been a big year for Rural Development. Martin's loan helped the agency set a record for guaranteed rural housing loans in Kansas in a year at 800.



**Monty Appleby, Joan Turner, Mark Martin, Chuck Banks and Teresa Bradbury gather for a dedication of Martin's new home in Arkansas City. Martin is a former worker at the Rubbermaid plant in Centerville, Iowa. (Roy Graber/Courier)**